

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDA-12 NEAE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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-----072745 211645Z /40

O R 211553Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7195
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1526

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, SY, LE, IS
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH UK EMBOFF

1. COUNSELOR OF UK EMBASSY DAY CALLED ON DCM MARCH 21 TO DISCUSS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS RE SOUTH LEBANON. HE SAID QUESTION OF DEPLOYMENT OF UK FORCES WAS NOW ACTIVELY UNDER DISCUSSION IN LONDON AND NO FINAL DECISION HAD BEEN MADE. SOME ELEMENTS IN UKG WISHED TO VOLUNTEER BRITISH FORCES TO PARTICIPATE IN PEACEKEEPING FORCE ITSELF BUT OTHERS (INCLUDING UK AMBASSADOR WAKEFIELD HERE) WERE AFRAID THAT BRITISH SOLDIERS MIGHT BE THE RED FLAG IN FRONT OF THE BULL AS FAR AS PALESTINIANS WERE CONCERNED. DAY EXPECTED UKG WOULD MAKE UP ITS MIND ON THIS VERY SOON. DAY SAID UK AMB IN TEL AVIV HAD IMPRESSION THAT ISRAELIS DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT MAIN UNIFIL ACCESS TO SOUTH LEBANON TO BE VIA ISRAEL.

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2. DAY SAID THAT UKG WAS NOT SURE WHAT THE PLO POSITION WAS ON A CEASE-FIRE. DCM REPLIED THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL PALESTINIAN STATEMENTS IN Wafa AND FALASTIN AL THAWRA INDICATING THAT PLO INTENDED TO CONTINUE FIRING ON ISRAELIS AS LONG AS THEY WERE IN LEBANON, ALTHOUGH OFFICIALS SUCH AS ARAFAT AND SALAH KHALAF HAD NOT YET

MADE PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE MATTER. IN GENERAL,
PLO SEEMED TO BE MAINTAINING A BELLIGERENT POSTURE.

3. DAY SAID THAT UKG WAS CONTINUING TO WORRY ABOUT
"THE GAP" BETWEEN UNIFIL FORCES SOUTH OF THE LITANI AND
THE SOUTHERNMOST EXTENSION OF THE ADF. HE SAID HE HAD
HEARD THAT USG WAS THINKING OF TRYING TO GET AGREEMENT
FOR THE ADF TO MOVE SOUTHWARD TO CLOSE THE
GAP. DCM REPLIED THAT THIS WAS CERTAINLY ONE IDEA THAT
WAS BEING DISCUSSED AND MENTIONED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT
WEIZMAN HAD SAID IT WAS NEGOTIABLE.

4. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF WHAT MAY HAPPEN DURING NEXT
FEW DAYS, DAY SAID THAT THEIR "NIGHTMARE SCENARIO" WAS
THAT SOME INCIDENT WOULD OCCUR BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND
PALESTINIANS IN BEIRUT AND THAT ISRAELIS WOULD THEN
LAUNCH AN ATTACK THROUGH SOUTHERN LEBANON TO BEIRUT TO
"SAVE THEIR CHRISTIAN ALLIES." WE AGREED THAT SUCH A
DEVELOPMENT WOULD PROBABLY START THE FIFTH ARAB-ISRAELI
WAR, WOULD BRING TERRIBLE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO
LEBANON, AND WHATEVER ITS SHORT-RUN CONSEQUENCES,
WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS' LONG-
TERM POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. DAY SAID THAT AS FAR
AS HE WAS AWARE NO REPEAT NO RESPONSIBLE CHRISTIAN
LEADERS WERE THINKING IN THESE TERMS, BUT WE AGREED
THAT THE CHRISTIANS WERE INCREASINGLY UPSET BY THE MOVE-
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MENT OF PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS NORTHWARD AND THEIR
REINFORCEMENT BY OTHER ARAB STATES, PARTICULARLY IRAQ.
IT WAS ALWAYS POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT TENSE ATMOSPHERE
FOR SOMEONE ON THE LUNATIC FRINGE TO CAUSE AN INCIDENT THAT
COULD HAVE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES.
PARKER

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